Shhh!

NO GOSSIP!

ASHISH RAICHUR

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1. GOSSIP

The Bible, Psalm 15—a Psalm of David—describes the kind of person who can commune with God, dwelling in His presence and worshipping Him.

Psalm 15:1-5
1 Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?
2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart;
3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;
4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

While there are several characteristics of such a person highlighted in this Psalm, we focus on Verse 3:

Psalm 15:3 (New Living Translation)
Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.

Gossip, backbiting, and speaking evil of others are those sins, which we often take lightly, but these affect our relationship with God. These sins hinder our communion and worship of God and our experience of His presence.

What Gossip Is

The dictionary definition for "gossip" is "casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details which are not confirmed as true" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Gossip typically is idle talk or rumor, especially about personal or private affairs of others. It is the spreading of misinformation about people.

In this book, we will use the following terms interchangeably: gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, whisperer, talebearer, although there are some finer differences in the meaning of each. The NKJV Bible uses the word "talebearer" for a gossiper, backbiter, or

slanderer. For the sake of our understanding, we will briefly define some of these terms, although we use them interchangeably.

- ***Backbiting*** is malicious talk about someone who is not present; harming someone's reputation without offering them a chance of defense. It is, as the word depicts, to "bite" them behind their backs.
- ***Backstabbing*** the action of criticizing someone in a treacherous manner while pretending friendship with them.
- ***Slander*** is making a false, negative, malicious, and defamatory statement or report about someone.
- ***Tattletale(talebearer***) is one who reports the wrongdoings of others to an authority, usually with the intent of getting them into trouble, and not to resolve a problem.

In the Old Testament, when giving instructions about the community life among His people, God stated:

Exodus 23:I
You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Leviticus 19:16
You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:16a (New Living Translation)
Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people.

Unfortunately, quite a few people enjoy gossip or talebearing and hence indulge in it. Gossip is like a "sumptuous meal" for some people. They enjoy engaging in gossip and talking about others. They feel they had their fill, after spending an hour or so in gossip. Rumors sink into a person's heart. We think this is just light-hearted talk that amounts to nothing. But what is gossiped affects people.

Proverbs 18:8 (same as Proverbs 26:22)
The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down Into the Inmost body.

What Is Not Considered Gossip

There are times when we do have to speak about others, talk about their strengths, weaknesses, and assess their failures. However, these is not considered gossip when it is done for a good purpose and in a non-malicious manner. Consider some examples:

Casual Talk/Sharing of Information Without Demeaning Anyone

For example, you may share your experience about meeting someone and whether you found your time well spent, whether the outcome of the meeting was positive or negative and discuss other related matters. In such situations, you give your honest assessment, without any intent to demean anyone.

Sharing About a Certain Experience that May Include What Others Said or Did

Here again, you may share details, but you do this with no harm intended to any of the people involved.

Professional Assessment of an Experience or Evaluation of an Individual or Situation

This happens regularly in workplace situations. For example, when you are reporting about an interview of a candidate, doing performance appraisals, resolving a difficult situation, and so on. In these contexts, you honestly discuss strengths and weaknesses, good and bad, to present an accurate picture.

Seeking to Get a Matter Resolved

In situations where there has been conflict or problems, we review the series of events and things that transpired, to arrive at a fair conclusion or decision on the next course of action. Here is what the Scripture instructs us to do: "*Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED·. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector*" (Matthew 18:15-17).

When Addressing a Matter Where There Is Wrongdoing or Moral Failure

In such situations, we need to address matters with all those involved, talk about the wrong that was done and work toward correction and restoration. We do not attempt to hide the wrong that was done, but we address the matter as instructed in Galatians 6:I: "*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted*." Sin and wrongdoing must be acknowledged and repented of, as instructed in James 5:16:

"*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed*."

In Exposing Wrong so that People will not Be Led Astray

There are times we may have to address matters of concern publicly and expose wrongdoing and wrongdoers. We do this with the intent of warning and protecting others, so that they may be preserved from harm and danger. While our hearts are filled with mercy and compassion toward the wrongdoers, we expose their wrongdoing for the greater good of others. "*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them*" (Ephesians 5:11). *''Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear*" (I Timothy 5:20).

In all the above situations, the underlying premise is to *"speak the truth in love"* (Ephesians 4:15).

Reflection

1. If I make a close examination of my conversations, how often do I gossip and speak ill of others?
   □ Very Often □ Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely
2. How often do I enjoy listening to people gossip about others, without trying to stop the gossip or walk away from listening to it?
   □ Very Often □ Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely,

2. Common Situations Where Gossip Happens

Let us consider some common situations where we encounter gossip.

Community Gossip

Usually among a community that is connected for various reasons, "news" spreads as people talk to each other. We have residential communities, social communities, and many more. The local church is also a community, where many people are connected because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and fellowship.

In any community, there will and has to be sharing of information about each other. This is important and has its benefits.

For example, about the local church community, the Bible does tell us:

Romans 12:15
Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

1 Corinthians 12:26
And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

If this is to be possible, it does mean that we need to get to know what is happening—the good and the bad—in each other's life. So, we rejoice, we weep, we suffer, we honor each other, and journey together in these things. We share life together. However, the sharing of such news must be done in an honorable manner, without engaging in gossip, backbiting, slander, backstabbing, or talebearing.

Interestingly we find, in several epistles, the issue of gossip and idle talk being addressed in relation to a local church or local community of believers.

Writing to the Corinthian Church, where Paul had to address the issue of sexual immorality and called the church to repentance, Apostle Paul was greatly concerned that when he visits them he would find people engaging in "backbitings, whisperings."

2 Corinthians 12:20
For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

As Paul writes to Timothy who is overseeing the church at Ephesus, he states about young widows, and this would apply to all in general, that when they become idle, they begin to indulge in gossip, meddling in other people's business, and talking about things they ought not to.

1 Timothy 5:13
And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

Similarly, in writing to the Thessalonians, Paul rebukes those who are busybodies, people meddling in other's business. Part of this would include gossiping and idle talk about other people. Paul commands such people to get to work.

1 Thessalonians 3:11-12
11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.
12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

In local church communities, gossip happens in supposedly spiritual ways. Both congregation members and church leaders (i.e., pastors, etc.) engage in gossip and spreading rumors.

Here are some common ways that gossip spreads among local church communities:

Prayer Requests

The conversation usually starts off with a very spiritual statement like this: "Oh, we really need to pray for so-and-so." And the rest of the conversation is all the dirt and gossip about that person, and it all ends with "just keep this in prayer." We use this prayer request facade to cover up what really is gossip. This needs to stop. Let us choose to stay away from this.

Pastoral Counseling And Mentoring

People come to us, pastors and spiritual leaders, for spiritual help. In doing so, very often they share their personal struggles, failures, and other things which they may not do so with others. They share this in confidence and good trust. However, many pastors and

spiritual leaders are guilty of breaking this trust by disclosing individual personal information to others in casual conversation. This is nothing but gossip, even when it is done by a spiritual leader! This needs to stop! What is shared in confidence must remain in confidence.

Coattail Association

Sometimes people like to ride on the coattails of more accomplished people, example a senior pastor or leader, by trying to show others that they are closely associated or connected with them. They do this by rattling off some personal and private information about the person, whose coattail they want to ride on. Of course, others get impressed and think that this person who knows such inside information must be really close to that senior pastor or leader. This is nothing but gossip. If you are really a true friend and closely associated with your senior pastor or leader, you would not want to ride his coattail. You would not want to borrow his honor for yourself. You would be very careful before mentioning private matters in public.

Pointing Faults Without Resolving Problems

People make mistakes. Even so, in a community, conflict will arise because someone somewhere made a mistake; may have done something wrong or handled a matter improperly. What happens often is that the offended party goes around talking about the wrong that was done to people, which indirectly becomes a “smear campaign,” defaming the person who made the mistake. It becomes gossip, as more people begin to engage in passing on the information. All this increases division and strife in the community, without addressing or solving the problem. On the other hand, the Scripture teaches us what to do in such situations:

Matthew 18:15-17
15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’
17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Rather than pointing people's faults in public without resolving the matter, we must act in accordance with the Scripture and work toward bringing forgiveness, correction, and healing.

Many of the things said in the context of a local church community can be applied to other communities as well.

A community that engages in gossip will eventually self-destruct.

Galatians 5:15
But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Workplace Gossip

Many of us spend a major part of our lives in the workplace. We are at work five to six days a week, spending about a quarter of our time each week at our workplaces. Unfortunately, many people at work engage in gossip, backbiting, slander, backstabbing, or talebearing. They may do this about the boss, their colleagues, or others they work with. They engage in gossip, speaking to co-workers about something someone else has done to malign their reputation, etc.

Workplace gossip results in an unhealthy work environment. It also affects people emotionally and hence hampers individual or team performance. Eventually, the work environment gets so detestable, that people, often the good people, leave and find employment elsewhere. They leave not because the pay was not good or the work was not exciting, but often, because the work environment was distressing simply because of a few people who used to gossip and spread rumors. Good people who want to focus on their work don't really want to expend their time and energies fighting gossip and putting out rumor fires. They have better things to do!

Social Media Gossip

Social media has also provided a much faster way to disseminate gossip. In only a matter of minutes, harmful gossip and rumors can spread online at the click of a button. An individual's reputation could be marred through a single article posted online.

Reflection

1. Have you been the victim of community, workplace, or social media gossip? How were you affected by this? How did you handle it then? Looking back, could you have handled the situation differently?

3. Negative Consequences Of Gossip

While gossip may not seem as heinous a crime as some other acts of violence, not many of us recognize the serious negative impact gossip has on us and others. While we have already stated a few negative consequences of gossip earlier, let us consider a few more in this chapter.

Gossip Is Unproductive And Time Wasted

Sometimes hours can go by, with people engaging in gossip. That is why it is called "idle talk." It is completely unproductive. Not only is it time wasted but often the ones engaging in gossip expend a lot of emotional energy as well and feel drained at the end of it.

Sometimes people engage in gossip as a therapeutic measure, to "vent out" or share one's emotions especially when going through difficult times. While we agree with the importance of speaking out and sharing one's challenges, this must be done by speaking with the right people and in a healthy manner without tearing down another individual, and with an effort to work toward a solution to the problem.

Gossip Erodes Trust As A Person's Reputation Is Marred And Character Assassinated

The person who is gossiped about has no opportunity to explain himself, while he is being "assassinated," and his reputation is destroyed. In a moment, people who hear false information, arrive at conclusions about an individual's character, may judge the person incorrectly, and lose trust in that person. They end up with an inaccurate picture of who the individual is, simply because of being provided with wrong information through gossip.

Proverbs 11:13
A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.

When you are a faithful friend, you will seek to stand by your friend and not reveal his failures to demean or destroy him.

Sometimes, it can be shocking to meet someone for the first time, and they seem to have already heard about you, and unfortunately, what they have heard has all been negative.

Gossip seems to have travelled ahead and already brought disrepute and damage to your name even before you got there. So then you are faced with the huge task of trying to help that person really get to know you and make a fresh assessment of who you really are. Sometimes, the thought of having to work through this can be demoralizing.

Gossip Affects People Emotionally

Wrong information that spreads through gossip like wildfire, can act on emotions causing anxiety and demoralizing people.

Proverbs 25:18
A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.

Proverbs 25:18 (New Living Translation)
Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.

For example, in the workplace, employees can get demoralized as rumors circulate without any clear information as to what is factual and what is not. It creates an unhealthy work environment and good employees would want to leave.

Similarly, in a church community if believers engage in gossip, backbiting, slander, and talebearing, it causes people to not want to be part of such a community and they tend to drop out of church or leave.

Shaming of individuals through gossip either in person or online can cause one's personal reputation to be damaged almost instantaneously. People lose their reputation and dignity and are put through a lot of emotional trauma simply through the uncompassionate act of gossip and slander.

Consider the seriousness of the emotional impact of gossip, even on teenagers. In present times, teenagers are "bullied" online through social media by friends or schoolmates, gossiping and slandering them to the point where a few have committed suicide. This has even led to the coining of the term "cyberbullying" which is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person, and is a serious thing. [A useful resource site for parents of teenagers: http://cyberbullying.us/].

Gossip Destroys Relationships

Gossip, slander, and spreading of false information about others, often results in breaking down of relationships. When people believe the lie they have heard, they are hurt. Feelings of anger and ill-will set in and good relationships are lost.

Consider what the Scriptures state:

Proverbs 16:28
A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 25:23 (New Living Translation)
As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes anger.

Proverbs 26:20
Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

Small seeds of gossip can result in separating the best of friends, as mistrust and strife are sown. Relationships are destroyed. Gossip fuels wrong emotions and ill-feelings. People are divided as they are forced to take sides. This can happen in the workplace or in any community. To maintain peace and harmony, we need to ensure that gossip stops.

Reflection

1. What are some other negative consequences of gossip that you can think of?
2. Are there some real-life situations that you have observed where gossip has affected people emotionally? What was the outcome?
3. Are there some real-life situations that you have observed where gossip has destroyed relationships? What was the outcome? Were people reconciled and were they able to bring an end to the gossip? If so, how did they go about doing this?

4. God's Serious Stand Against Gossip

In addition to what we have already seen in Scripture concerning gossip, backbiting, slandering, back-stabbing, and talebearing, we would like to consider some of the serious rebukes concerning gossip that God makes in Scripture.

One of the Ten Commandments God gave to His people is:

Exodus 20:16
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

This means you will not speak lies, misrepresent, or spread false information about your neighbor.

God rebukes His people for indulging in slander and warns that He will step in, to bring correction, and set things in order.

Psalm 50:19-21
19 You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.
21 These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.

Being a false witness, speaking lies about other people, and sowing discord among brethren are among the things that are detestable to God.

Proverbs 6:16-19
16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.

As we have seen earlier, one of the ways we sow discord or disunity among people is through gossip and slander. This is something that God hates.

A slanderer is called a fool. Gossip then is a foolish thing to be involved in.

Proverbs I0:18
Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

Romans 1:28-32, puts gossip and backbiting in the same list as murder, immorality etc.

Romans 1:28-32
28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;
29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers (gossip),
30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,
31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;
32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

The warning "those who practice such things are deserving of death" includes gossipers and backbiters. Such is God's solemn stand against gossip. To put it plainly, gossiping is sin. It is an offense before God.

In essence, gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, and talebearing are things we must not engage in at all.

Reflection

1. If the Bible is so clear about the sin of gossip, backbiting, slander, backstabbing, and talebearing, why is it that believers still engage and participate in doing this?

5. How Do You Handle Gossip?

What can we do if we find ourselves in situations where people around us begin to gossip, slander, backbite, and spread rumors? What should we do if we become victim to such things? How should we respond and handle the disrepute, emotional hurt, and other effects of false information being spread about us?

Rise Above Gossip

To begin with, each of us personally must make a determined choice and be disciplined that we will not engage in or participate in gossip in any way. We will not descend to such a low level of conversation and activity. Even when we inadvertently find ourselves in places and situations where people gossip, we will not participate and will not engage in gossip.

Psalm 34:13
Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.

Psalm39:1
I said, "I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me."

Psalm 139:4
For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.

We will restrain ourselves and refuse to sin against God. We know we cannot hide our gossip from God, even if we were to whisper it!

Don't say anything behind someone that you would not say in front of them.

How you say something in their absence, should be the same as how you would say it in their presence.

Keep your heart clean and free from offense or ill-feeling toward anyone. Purpose to always walk in love. This way you will not speak evil of people to demean, harm, or destroy them.

Matthew 15:19
For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

Romans 13:9
For the commandments, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER," "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL," "YOU SHALL NOT BFAR FALSE WITNESS," "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Refuse to retaliate. You do not win over gossip by spreading gossip.

Confront Lovingly If Possible

Where possible, address the matter with the person who initiated the rumor and false information, or the people engaged in gossip. Lovingly help them see the harm that is being done through the spreading of gossip. Encourage them to rise above this and address the real issue with the person(s) directly involved without having to gossip about the matter.

Let It Die Out

Don't fuel gossip. Allow for the gossip to die out. The less said the better in such situations. As more people refuse to participate, the story will eventually die out.

When possible, choose to counteract gossip by speaking positive things about the individual or situation. Help people see the better side of things. Gossip and rumors are based on half-truths, on incomplete information, or false information. So, by speaking of the better side of things, we counteract the half-truths that are spreading.

Pray, Forgive, And Release

If you are the victim of slander and gossip, pray. The Lord will come to your defense.

Psalm 31:13-16
13 For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, they scheme to take away my life.
14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.”
15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, And from those who persecute me.
16 Make Your face shine upon Your servant; Save me for Your mercies’ sake.

When people gossip about you and spread rumors about you, it hurts. It is painful. Release

your pain and feelings of hurt to God in prayer. Talk to God about the matter. Pour out your heart and feelings to Him.
Release forgiveness toward those who are doing this. Choose to love them despite what they are doing. There could be betrayal, revenge, and other wrong motives behind what they are doing. But you choose to still love them with the love of God. You choose to still forgive and release them, and look to God for your defense and vindication. "*But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*" (Luke 6:27-28).

Let Us Make Our Community a Gossip-Free Zone

Let us be a community of people who have zero tolerance for gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, and talebearing. Gossip, backbiting, slander, back-stabbing, talebearing—these will not exist among us! Gossip is a weed that troubles and chokes God's beautiful garden, the Church. Let us create a culture and develop self-discipline that keeps His garden weed-free.

Reflection

1. Are there specific situation(s) you are currently facing, where you need to overcome gossip, slander, and backbiting? What are some things you can do specific to your situation(s) to overcome?

6. PRAYER

Prayer Of Confession And Repentance

Dear Father in heaven, I confess that I have not been watchful about my speech. I have knowingly and sometimes unknowingly gossiped, slandered, and spoken ill of others. I am guilty of spreading rumors and damaging people's reputation. I repent of my wrongdoing and ask You to please forgive and cleanse me from my sin, with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. I renounce this lifestyle of gossiping. Also, please set a watch over my tongue so that I may not continue in gossip, slander, and speaking ill of others. I thank You for doing this. In Jesus'· name. Amen.

Prayer For Those Who Have Been Hurt By Gossip In The Past

Dear Father, I pour out my heart to You because I know You love and care for me. You know my innermost thoughts and feelings. You know that I have felt hurt and pain because of the gossip, slander, and rumors that have been spread about me by (name the people or situation). I bring my hurt and emotions to You and ask You to heal me of my pain. Heal my emotions and my memories, O Lord. With the strength of the Holy Spirit and the power He gives me to love, I release forgiveness to those who have hurt me. I release the love of God that has been poured into my heart, to them. I ask that You divinely intervene on my behalf and release my life from any damage caused by these rumors, gossip, and slander. Grace my life with Your favor and honor. Let Your hand lift me up. You O Lord, are my glory and the lifter of my head. Lord, I look to You and my eyes are upon You alone. Thank You Father for Your work in my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer For Those In The Middle Of Situations Where Gossip Is Happening

Dear Father, I pour out my heart to You because I know You love and care for me. You know my innermost thoughts and feelings. You know that I have felt hurt and pain because of the gossip, slander, and rumors that have been spread about me by (name the people or situation). I bring my hurt and emotions to You and ask You to heal me of my pain. With the strength of the Holy Spirit and the power He gives me to love, I release forgiveness to those who have hurt me. I release the love of God that has been poured into my heart, to them. I ask that You divinely intervene on my behalf and, cause these rumors, gossip, and slander to stop and surround me with Your favor. Place honor on my life and let Your hand lift me up. Lord, I look to You and my eyes are upon You alone. Thank You Father for Your work in my life. In Jesus'· name. Amen.

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Kindly note: All Peoples Church can only accept bank contributions from an India based bank account. When making your contribution, if desired, you can indicate the specific APC ministry area where you would like your contribution to be used. For additional details please visit ***apcwo.org/give***

Also, please remember to pray for us and our ministry whenever you can. **Thank You and God Bless!**

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PDF versions of all the above books are available for free download from our church website at **apcwo.org/books**. Many of these books are also available in other languages. To request your free copy of these books, please send an email to **bookrequest@apcwo.org**

*Available only as PDF

Also visit our church website for free Audio and Video sermons, Sermon notes (**apcwo.org/sermons**), and many other resources you can use.

About All Peoples Church

At All Peoples Church (APC), our vision is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore and a voice to the nation of India and to the nations of the world.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, uncompromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology, and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4-5; Hebrews 2:3-4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is Holy Spirit power, our passion is people, and our goal is Christlike maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at **www.apcwo.org/locations** or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

DO YOU KNOW THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the Earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All of these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy, and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, *"***For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven.

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so He came, to provide a way for the entire human race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him whole-heartedly.

"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

… "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins, so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I make a decision to believe in You and to accept what You did for me, by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins..

Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You. Amen.

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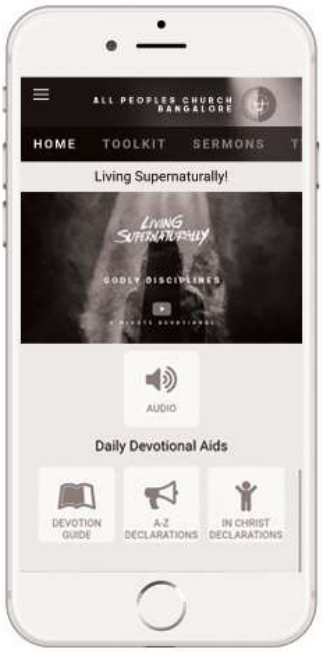

A daily 5-minute video devotional.
A daily Bible reading and prayer guide.
5-minute Sermon summary.
Toolkit with Scriptures on various topics to build faith and information to share the Gospel.
Resources with sermons, sermon notes, TV programs, books, music and more.

IF YOU LOVE IT, TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT!

All Peoples Church Bible College
apcbiblecollege.org

All Peoples Church Bible College and Ministry Training Center (APC-BC), in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God, and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders and miracles—all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At APC-BC in addition to sound teaching we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

We offer three programs:

- One-year Certificate in Theology and Christian Ministry (C.Th.)
- Two-year Diploma in Theology and Christian Ministry (Dip.Th.)
- Three-year Bachelor's in Theology and Christian Ministry (B.Th.)

Classes are held each weekday, **Monday to Friday from 9:00am-1pm**. Day scholars, working professionals, and homemakers can attend these classes and continue with their workday after 1pm. Separate hostel facilities are available for men and women who desire to be residential students. Students participate in field work, special seminars, prayer and worship times in the afternoon sessions, each weekday from 2pm-5pm. The afternoon sessions are optional for day scholars (non-residential students). All students are encouraged to serve at one or more local churches over the weekends.

To **apply online**, and for more information about the college, curriculum, eligibility criteria, tuition costs and to download the application form, please visit: **apcbiblecollege.org**

APC-BC is accredited by the Nations Association for Theological Accreditation (NATA).

Gossip, backbiting, slander and back-stabbing are things people commonly engage in without realizing the negative impact it has on individuals, communities, work environments and other social structures. People are hurt, communities disintegrate, work environments become hostile and unproductive, often due to a small thing called gossip. Gossip is like a weed that grows and if not removed quickly, it can destroy a beautiful garden. This simple book alerts us to scriptural teaching on gossip, helps us get rid of this lifestyle and also presents easy practical steps to handle gossip. We hope this resource will in some way help organizations develop healthy workplace environments; educational institutions to foster friendly and supportive student relationships; and people in communities to engage with a sense of love and concern for each other. Let gossip cease!

Ashish Raichur

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